

A

NARRATIVE  
OF THE  
LAST CRUISE OF THE  
UNITED STATES STEAM FRIGATE  
MISSOURI,

FROM THE DAY SHE LEFT NORFOLK, UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF HER CREW  
IN BOSTON;

INCLUDING A FULL AND CIRCUMSTANTIAL DETAIL OF THE  
GENERAL CONFLAGRATION,

WHICH TOOK PLACE AT GIBRALTAR, RESULTING IN HER TOTAL LOSS.  
INTERSPERSED WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES AND REMARKS.

By WILLIAM BOLTON,

ONE OF THE CREW.

NEW-YORK:  
HENRY LUDWIG, PRINTER, 72 VESEY-STREET.  
1844.

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TO  
THE OFFICERS AND CREW  
OF THE LATE  
U. S. STEAM FRIGATE MISSOURI,  
This little Work is most respectfully dedicated,  
BY THE AUTHOR.

BOSTON, OCTOBER, 1843.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1843,  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE following pages were written by the author during his passage home, as a source of recreation, to beguile the monotony of a tedious voyage. He has endeavoured to describe facts, and faithfully portray the many and various incidents, as they occurred. The cause and origin of the fire have been studiously avoided, it being deemed impertinent to make any remarks or opinions on a subject which may possibly become a matter of future investigation. Doubtless some things may have transpired that have escaped the eye or the ear of the writer, who has been guided in his delineations by truth only ; not from a desire to please, or a wish to detract from the merits of the participators in the scene.

Impressed with a lively sense of gratitude at the favourable conclusion of the catastrophe, without the loss of life or limb, the timely removal of the sick, and the care and aid exemplified in the conduct of the officer charged with our removal, immediately after the conflagration, and during our passage home, the author returns his warmest thanks, and is certain, in this re-

spect, the crew unanimously coincide with him in thus expressing their approbation. Separated as we shall most undoubtedly be, from those by whom we have been accustomed to be commanded, we shall carry with us the pleasing recollection of his services, and sincerely hope, as the 'sword subscribed for by the crew generally, could not, consistently with our laws, be received by him,' that he will find as valuable a substitute in our affections.

THE AUTHOR.

## NARRATIVE.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE U. S. Steam Frigate Missouri, commanded by John Thomas Newton, Esquire, left Norfolk, on the evening of the 5th of August, 1843, having on board the Hon. Caleb Cushing, U. S. Minister to China. Our destination was Alexandria, Egypt. Having made every preparation requisite for our voyage, we anticipated a quick, and pleasant passage. We numbered three hundred and eighty-four persons, all told. Being the first American Steam Frigate ever despatched across the Atlantic, considerable interest was thereby excited, she having proved herself an excellent ship, and a superior sailer, in her previous cruise to the West Indies and Mexico. We had taken on board, preparatory to sailing, an immense quantity of provisions, water, and coal, thereby increasing our draught of water to 21 feet 6 inches, aft, and 20 feet 9 inches, forward. Her masts, and yards, were of a size nearly equal to the largest frigate in the navy. Under such circumstances, it was not to be supposed she could, in point of speed, compete with the boasted performances of the Steam Packets, running between England and the United States, they being differently rigged, and drawing much less water. The Acadia drawing 15 feet; the Britannia, 16 feet; the President, 18 feet; and the Great Western, 18 feet 8 inches, which she never exceeded. The French

steamer Gomer, had sometime previously, performed the voyage from New York to Fayal, in twelve days. In precisely the same time, we performed the same distance, though under greater disadvantages. During the voyage we had a continuation of fine weather. The wind, though light, was uniformly ahead, yet we proceeded in gallant style, at from ten to eleven knots per hour, increasing our speed as we consumed our coal and provisions. Nothing of any moment occurred to disturb the harmony of the crew. All looked forward, with interest and pleasure, to the prosecution of our voyage. Many on board, were now crossing the Atlantic for the first time. To the old and experienced mariner, the changes about to be presented would not be so much noticed, as by the young and enthusiastic, who anticipate the gratification of their desires in every change, which fancy may dictate or novelty suggest. After the disembarkation of our Minister, the Hon. Caleb Cushing, we expected to cruise in the Mediterranean, and probably touch at Naples, Leghorn, Genoa, and Malta. Many and various were the schemes of pleasure proposed. Certainly, no place on earth could boast of a greater variety of attractions. In difference and variety of costumes, and in the habits, manners, and amusements of the inhabitants, much was to be seen, though little was to be admired. The rich and delicious fruits, the variety and delicacy of the viands, gave ample scope to the fastidious taste of the epicure, while the beautiful and finely wrought specimens of architecture and statuary, its splendid and enchanting paintings, presented a perpetual feast to the artist and connoisseur, furnishing a source of amusement, and a fund of information, not to be found elsewhere; once seen, never to be forgotten. But all our fond anticipations of the future were doomed to be overthrown. One sad, overwhelming catastrophe, swallowed up every thing in its vortex. Future pleasure gave way to present suffering.

## CHAPTER II.

ON the 18th of August, the man at the mast-head reported land. It proved to be the Peak of Pico, one of the Western Islands. As our ship neared the shores, all hands sought the deck, to feast their eyes on their beautiful appearance. Rising from the bed of the sea, cultivated to their very summits, they seemed to invite the weary mariner to repose. Much to our satisfaction, our commander decided upon coming to an anchor in Fayal. Every preparation being made, we soon came to, in fourteen fathoms of water, opposite the little town, called by the natives, Villa Orta. Several vessels, chiefly small craft, lay quietly at anchor in the bay. The hills, and adjacent cliffs, were covered with inhabitants, collected to view the strange ship, that had thus been descried at a distance, entered the port, and came to anchor, apparently but the work of a few moments. Immediately the decks were cleared, and the boats lowered. The drum beat to quarters, and a salute of seventeen guns was fired, which was promptly returned by the inhabitants on shore with an equal number. The sound reverberating and echoing among the rocks and cliffs, seemed like the discharge of hundreds of pieces of artillery, of the heaviest calibre. The American Consul now visited us. The usual civilities exchanged, a party of officers proceeded to the shore. It was soon ascertained that an English brig lay here, deeply laden with coals, the clear black diamonds, in all their purity; not the base combinations of soil and slate, which had been palmed on our Government, for the use of the ship, by interested coal-mine speculators. During the voyage, the seamen had been continually called to hoist up cinders. Such was the quantity created, that it seemed as if we had a Vesuvius or an *Aetna* beneath. This produced no small recrimination on the part of the crew, some declaring they did not ship for firemen; others, swearing that there was no such thing as hoist-

ing up cinders mentioned in the articles of war. Kind words, with an extra allowance of grog, soon restored good humour, and after a little snoozing between the guns, the boatswain's mate returned to the charge, vociferating, in a voice of thunder, 'Aft, all the starboard watch of fore-top men, and hoist up cinders !'

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### CHAPTER III.

THE superiority of the coal received on board here was very great, as was proved to a demonstration during our run to Gibraltar, and which will be seen hereafter. Launches, laden with this article, were soon alongside, and all hands busily engaged in hoisting it on board and stowing it below. Some hundreds of boats were now plying round the ship, filled with the various productions of the place. The choicest figs and grapes, onions, potatoes, cheese, and fish, and a variety of other articles, were temptingly exposed for sale ; accompanied with the loudest yelling, jangling, and talking, all at the same time, to see who should first get on board and secure a market for their commodities. That the duties of the ship might not be interrupted, it had been wisely ordered that they should not come on board, except at meal-times. The rush that then took place among these poor Islanders was inconceivable. Some passing their articles through the ports ; others darting up the gangways, with baskets loaded with grapes and figs, and as suddenly arrested and overhauled by the Master at Arms, to prevent smuggled liquor. Numbers, as they arrived on deck, ran about, exclaiming at the top of their voices, 'Ouvas, Ouvas maduras por garafas vacias.'\* Others, vociferating, ' Rica fruta madura, sebolhas é patatas inglesas, por ropa, é garafas vacias.'† The confusion was greater, as their numbers increased. Here, a

\* Fine ripe grapes, for empty bottles.

† Rich, ripe fruit, onions and potatoes, for old clothes, or empty bottles.

basket of potatoes capsized ; there, a parcel of cheeses mashed, by the careless footstep of some passer by. Many, determined to avail themselves to the utmost by our arrival, brought with them whole families of little children, who were running about in all directions among the messes, picking up and eating everything they could lay their hands on, and pocketing the surplus. Very often they came in contact with the Captain's pigs, who were seeking their grub from the same sources, and who seemed to view the operations of their new acquaintance with no friendly eye. Both were sometimes contending for the same piece of biscuit, or the same bone, the pigs very often being compelled to yield up their spoils to their more fainted invaders. We had on board a she bear, named Bess, belonging to one of the officers. She had been a previous cruise in the Ontario Sloop of War. From her tameness and playful disposition, she had become a general pet. This animal, unable to withstand the temptation of a fine basket of grapes, the property of an old Portuguese, most unceremoniously seized the whole, and was fast making off, amidst pigs and chickens, children and dogs, when the owner gave chase. On coming up with her, a battle royal ensued, the Portuguese being seized by the seat of honor, and losing a goodly portion of that part of his breeches, besides some scratches and tumbles, was forced to relinquish the prize. Bess now bore them off victorious, and demolished them at her leisure. As the time approached for resuming our duties, the Master at Arms found ample employment in seeking out, and ejecting from the ship, *sans ceremonie*, all strangers. Those who were so fortunate as to effect a sale or an exchange, returned on shore to procure a fresh supply, and be enabled to resume their traffic in the evening. During our stay, we derived considerable enjoyment in purchasing and exchanging our salt provisions, for the delicious fruits, and fine vegetables and fish, so temptingly arrayed before us.

## CHAPTER IV.

NOTHING can be more beautiful than the general appearance of the land around. The bay on which the town is situated representing a beautiful amphitheatre, clothed with vegetation. The hills, being cultivated to their very summits, as the superabundance of vegetables and fruits abundantly testified, were divided into innumerable small pieces, each having the appearance of a well-cultivated garden. The town is said to contain more than 5000 inhabitants. Fayal, the name of the Island, derives its name from the word *Faya*, the beach tree, with which the Island abounds. The houses are of stone, one and two stories high, many of them almost entirely obscured by the number of fig trees with which they are surrounded. The streets are high, narrow, and badly constructed, and, like those of Havana, remain in precisely the same situation the last rain left them. The inhabitants form two distinct classes, the rich and the poor. The former, enjoying all the advantages and luxuries peculiar to this favoured clime ; revelling in plenty, and feasting on the productions of the land. The latter, reared in ignorance, and combating with poverty, devote their time to the cultivation of the soil, attending to the vineyards, and in fishing. The noble bay before the town abounds with the finest fish and turtle, which may be caught without much difficulty. Lobsters and crabs, of a large size, abound. Wine is made here and in the neighbouring island of Pico, in large quantities, both for domestic consumption and exportation. Some of it is not inferior to the choicest Madeira. It forms the principal source of revenue to the inhabitants, many of whom have become extremely opulent. Interspersed throughout the town may be seen the gilded spires of the churches and convents. In the morning, the ringing of bells, and the loud chanting of the nuns, declare to the stranger, that the Catholic is the prevailing religion of the place.

Some few English and Americans have settled here, and have, by long residence, and intermarrying with the natives, become so amalgamated with the inhabitants, as to neither wish for, nor desire, a removal. Being surrounded by the sea, the air is extremely wholesome, causing it to become a place of great resort to the invalid and valetudinarian. The Peak of Pico, opposite, is remarkable for its extreme altitude, being seven thousand feet above the level of the sea. The whole Island is extremely beautiful, and highly cultivated. The time for our departure was now fast approaching. Sunday came, accompanied as usual with a cessation from our labours. It was the last Sabbath we were destined to enjoy on board our ship. Breakfast being over, the drums beat to quarters. After inspection, a number of the residents of the place, apparently of the highest respectability, arrived. They were received on board, by our commander, with his accustomed urbanity, and, directly mingling with our officers, proceeded to gratify their curiosity in viewing the ship. Ladies and gentlemen were soon seen promenading both decks. The gray-headed old man and the beardless boy, the graceful young female and the superannuated old matron, alike seemed determined that our ship should undergo the minutest investigation. Nothing escaped their notice. Exclamations of 'Muy limpia,\* muy linda,† formosa fragata,'‡ were continually heard. All seemed pleased; some delighted. An old gentleman, having the appearance of an officer, whose opinions seemed to be received with marked deference, exclaimed aloud, 'A mas linda nave, que jamas entro nos-sa Porto, queria Deos que haviamos huma frota de estas.§ Many and various were the encomiums bestowed on the ship, and its appearance. The boatswain now piped all hands to muster. We immediately repaired aft, and were mustered accordingly.

\* Very clean, † very handsome, ‡ beautiful ship.

§ The finest ship that ever entered our port; I wish we had a navy composed of such.

Divine service was performed for the last time, by our commander; our visitors remaining in profound silence during the performance, many of them evidently considering it equally worthy of their attention. The fires had been kindled, and the repeated escapements and loud hissing of the steam, forewarned us that the hour of our departure was at hand. Friendly greetings and hasty adieus now took place on both sides. Our visitors, among whom was the American Consul and his amiable family, now sought their boats, highly pleased with their visit to 'Los Americanos.'

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## CHAPTER V.

'ALL hands unmoor ship!' was now vociferated from one end of the ship to the other, accompanied with a due proportion of piping and commands. Every man repaired to his station with alacrity. To weigh our anchor, and loose our sails to the wind, was the work of a moment. Soon we left our recent acquaintance far behind. The wind becoming unfavourable, we furled our sails, and proceeded with steam only. We soon made the island of St. Michael's, the land trending to the northeast. We run along finely, having the land under our lee, occasionally feasting our eyes with its beautiful vineyards and groves of trees, now fast receding from our view. Astern, was still to be seen the snow-capped summits of Pico. The change in our coals was now evident, in the superior speed of our ship, which seemed to plough her way through the water at a fearful rate, with a wind far from being favourable. The incrustation on the fire-grates was now considerably reduced, while the generic power of the steam was greatly augmented. The hoisting of cinders was reduced two-thirds; the quantity of oxygen and hydrogen contained in our coals being so great, that the whole was nearly consumed. We pursued our

voyage at a rapid rate, and soon made the land. The wind was directly ahead, and had been gradually increasing. It was now blowing furiously, so much so, as to preclude our carrying top-gallant sails, had it been favourable ; notwithstanding, we continued running along up the Gut, with the land on both sides of us, at the rate of twelve and a half and thirteen knots an hour, and arrived in Gibraltar on the evening of the 25th, in safety. Had we taken in a supply of coals, similar in all respects to those which had been taken in at Fayal, we should most unquestionably have accomplished the whole distance from Norfolk to Gibraltar in fourteen days. These observations may seem trivial, and scarcely worth relating ; still, they go far to prove, that in the construction of steam ships, if not superior we are at least equal to our transatlantic neighbours, who assume to be the *ne plus ultra* of human greatness, in all their transactions. In naval architecture, generally, the palm of superiority has already been conceded. From a variety of circumstances, beyond the reach of all human foresight, our navy has lately been deprived of several of its finest ships. The Peacock, the Concord, and the Grampus, have rapidly disappeared ; and, to add to the regret of our country, another, more beautiful, more powerful, replete with all that art could bestow on her hull and machinery, has succumbed to the mighty power of fate, and yielded, though not without a struggle, to her destiny. Nations, like individuals, are sometimes schooled in adversity. It is to be hoped that the misfortunes of the past will prove lessons for the future, and enable us to improve by our experience, and counteract successfully every thing opposed to true science and sound philosophy. We now arrived at Gibraltar, and, as we were running along to our anchorage, spoke the British line of battleship Malabar, seventy-four, lying at anchor in the bay. We now came to, in quarter less four, nearly abreast the quay.

## CHAPTER VI.

FOR the benefit of my readers, or rather such as may not have been gratified with a visit to this 'Rock of Ages,' as it has been so justly styled in Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, I will for a moment digress from my subject, and endeavour to give a short description of this remarkable place. On viewing this rock, the beholder is struck with its remarkable appearance. Its high, bold, and lofty situation, its well fortified heights, its intricate winding passages, its subterranean magazines and store-houses, its numerous and well-appointed garrisons, its many and powerful fortifications, exhibiting the acme of taste, strength, and military science, in all their various ramifications, proclaim its power and ability to hurl defiance to the combined fleets of Christendom. From its commanding situation, it is, and probably ever will be, the key to the Mediterranean. Cuba has its Moro, Africa its Ceuta, but the world has but one Gibraltar. In natural strength and military and naval importance, it is without a parallel. Its price a seven years' war, a noble trophy to the prowess of British arms and enterprise. The value attached to this place may be inferred from the following circumstances. In time of peace, seven thousand troops are stationed here. The various store-houses contain every thing necessary or useful for the soldier. In fact, every requisite for an army of ten thousand men, for a protracted siege, or rather blockade of seven years, is constantly kept in these subterranean excavations. The immense magazines and tanks are crammed to their utmost capacity with ammunition and water. The Naval Depot and Dock Yard are both ingenious and well constructed, and, like every thing else, exhibit the skill and attainments of the engineer, and demonstrate most forcibly the triumph of science over nature. They abound with every requisite for a fleet of thirty sail of frigates and line of battle ships. The houses are of

stone, one and two stories high, erected on streets and alleys one over the other, like a flight of steps, filled with the most motley group to be found concentrated on any one spot, of equal size, in the universe. The Turk and the Moor, the Greek and the Jew, equally mix and associate with the various inhabitants of the earth, all subject to the *Visé* of the military, and liable, in case of investment, to be expelled at short notice, free-holders excepted, who must perform the duties of the soldier, and be subject to the same rules and receive the same pay and rations, during the continuance of the siege. Fifteen hundred convicts are continually employed on the fortifications in forming larger and deeper excavations, intended for future magazines and store-houses, and in the erection of additional bomb-proof batteries. They have a most excellent market, well supplied from the adjacent country with an abundance of fine fruits and vegetables. There is also a neat little church. Every man is his own banker. From its being a neutral port, every thing is offered for sale very cheap. It has a noble bay, where ships from all parts of the world are continually arriving and departing, freighted with the various productions of their respective countries. About four miles distant is the pleasant little village of St. Roque, where may be had the finest grapes and the purest 'Frontignac' this side Cadiz. Opposite, and across the bay, lies Algesieras, noted for the immense throngs of Spanish smugglers with which it is infested, and the rapacity of the inhabitants, who seem to consider the pockets of every foreigner as their sinecure.

## CHAPTER VII.

'Emblem of Heaven, instrument of power,  
Man is thy victim, shipwrecks thy dower;  
Jewels and spices, from land and from sea,  
Armies and banners, are buried in thee.'

CORNWALL.

EARLY on the morning of the 26th, hammocks were piped up, and every preparation made for obtaining our supplies with as much expedition as possible. The boats were lowered, tackles got up and rove, and every thing put in readiness for immediate use. Breakfast being now piped, boats came alongside, filled with every thing that could in any way tend to gratify our wants. Those who were so fortunate as to have money by them, effected their various little purchases of fruit, pipes, cigars, &c., the master at arms, as usual, taking his station endeavouring to prevent the introduction of spirituous liquors. His exertions were not always successful, rum sometimes finding its way on board, being put in skins, and nicely intombed in a cheese, or in the earcase of a dead fowl. After breakfast, the commander of the Malabar 74, and the captain of the British steamer Loeust, came on board. They viewed the ship and her machinery throughout, expressing themselves in the most unqualified terms of praise and approbation. The Loeust was a small steamer, running as a packet between Gibraltar and Malta, and was in every respect a perfect model of symmetry and beauty. At 10 o'clock we fired a salute of 17 guns, which was answered from the shore. Launchees now arriving alongside filled with coal, were discharged in rapid succession. Firemen were below, busily employed in oiling and cleaning the engine; work was progressing rapidly. Our stay was to be short, consequently every moment was devoted to the various duties that now fell so rapidly upon us. In this manner passed the time until evening. The water had all been hoisted in, and the launch hauled off. Two

others were alongside, filled with coal. Several Spaniards, and many of our men, were in it, filling bags. One man, who had earned from his shipmates the 'sobriquet' of 'the member from Clare,' sat perched on the hammock nettings, doing the duty of a boatswain's mate, in attending to the yard and stay, it being now five minutes past 8, suddenly exclaimed, 'ring the bell ! ring the bell !! fire ! fire !!' and immediately sprung down into the launch below. A marine, standing by, observing the flames bursting out some three or four feet above the fore hatches, cried out, 'Oh Jasus, the ship is on fire!' and likewise plunged head foremost through the port into the launch. Several others followed their example, acting up to the good old maxim, 'self-preservation is the first law of nature.' The alarm now became general. 'Fire ! fire !!' was heard all over the ship. The bell was rung, the drummer, a mere boy, made his appearance, and after giving a few taps on his drum, dropped it, and running aft, plunged overboard through the stern port. In an instant lines were formed, and every bucket in the ship put in requisition for passing water. The powerful double-boxed engine pumps were strongly manned, the hose stretched and pointed down the hatchway, and every effort made to extinguish the flames. The fire, deriving additional strength from the combustible materials below, such as hemp, oil, turpentine, and paints, assumed every moment a more frightful appearance. In the mean time, the Spaniards in the launch becoming alarmed for their safety, yelled out most furiously, 'Fuego ! fuego !! el buque esta encendido, perderamos el bote, larga ! corta ! corta !!\* It was cut accordingly. They making the best of their way from the ship, came in contact with the Captain, who was returning on board in his gig. The 'member from Clare,' thinking, probably, he had carried out nature's first law a little too far, hailed our commander, asking him if he wanted any assistance :

\* 'Fire ! fire !! The ship is on fire, we shall lose our boat, let go ! cut away ! cut away !!'

who imagining it to be a boat from the British steamer, answered 'yes, bring your engine alongside.' So many of our men having taken refuge in the boat, they were able to overcome the fears and expostulations of the Spaniards, and accordingly pulled up under the stern. The bravest soldiers in Napoleon's army, men who had acquired laurels and honors won amidst the strife and carnage of Wagram, Austerlitz, and the Bridge of Lodi, evinced more or less panic upon the first fire or charge of the enemy. The same was exemplified in the conduct of some of our men at the commencement of the tragedy, though with far better reason, it being well known that 2900 lbs. of powder was below, and the flames having the appearance of coming from that quarter. The 'member from Clare,' accompanied by several others, now returned on board, their first impression of fear having subsided. They were afterwards unceasing in their exertions in repelling our common enemy, thus removing all imputations of fear or cowardice.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

IN the mean time, our first Lieutenant having gained the deck, ere the sound had left the bell, immediately ordered the pumps to be rigged and manned. He then proceeded below, to ascertain the cause and origin of the fire. Then, accompanied by the gunner's mate, a hoary veteran of some three score voyages or more, they endeavoured to reach the forward magazine. But in this they were unsuccessful, the flames having now the undisputed possession of the whole after part of the berth deck, accompanied with such thick, dense volumes of smoke, as threatened instant suffocation. Not to be repulsed, they again sought a forcible entrance through the manger gratings forward. The flames now increasing with renewed violence below, had ascended several

feet above the after hatches on the spar deck, rendering all such measures fruitless and impracticable. Instant death would have been the result. Having now delivered the keys of the after magazine to the gunner, with orders to drown it immediately, he descended to the fire room. Here he found Mr. Farren, the assistant engineer, and the firemen, united in repulsing the flames. A moment's consultation was held, resulting in the ordering of the Kingston valves below, both in her bottom and bilge, to be immediately opened by the officers and men stationed there. These valves were twelve in number, six forward and six aft, each emitting a stream of water of four and a half inches in diameter. The two injection pipes, of six inches diameter each, were also opened. In a few minutes these men were standing up to their middle in water, awaiting further orders, nor did they retire until forced by the increasing depth of the water. Meanwhile Lieut. Hunter, in charge of the 2d and 3d divisions aft, assisted by Passed Midshipman Fairfax and Dr. Bowie, were engaged in the discharge of their duties. A sentry having been placed over the spirit room, together with the drowning of the after magazine, containing 5745 lbs. of powder, were two very essential points gained. A marine had been stationed at one of the ports to prevent accidents, and, as far as practicable, keep the coast clear below. The arm chests containing the powder-horns and the loaded shells, were instantly thrown overboard. A party of marines and seamen were actively engaged in hoisting up the shells and boxes from below, and consigning them to a similar fate. The powerful engine pumps continued to work unceasingly. The presiding officers, Lieut. Gray on the starboard, and Passed Midshipman Wainwright on the larboard side, infused confidence by their unremitting exertions.—now directing, now passing water, endeavouring in vain to extinguish the flames. Our first Lieutenant now appeared in the starboard gangway, asking who would follow him, aware no doubt of the old adage, that “one volunteer is worth three pressed men.”

Some dozen or more followed, and, amidst flames and smoke, arrived at the pumps and relieved many who, overcome with fatigue and the most unparalleled exertions, were glad to obtain a moment's respite. Midshipman March, struggling with the smoke and excessive heat, had now shifted the hose to the larboard after hatch, endeavouring in vain to prevent the flames from extending through the forward bulk-head of the engine room. The pumps were going incessantly, notwithstanding the men were frequently obliged to relax their hold to gain a little fresh air from the ports. Again and again, fresh gangs were collected and urged forward by their sense of duty and desire of conquering their general enemy. The flames were now bursting out the whole size of the forward hatch, and had communicated to the fore-trysail and boom covers. The smoke had now become so thick and dense as to make it impossible to recognize each other. All this appeared but the work of a moment, so violent was the work of the flames, the sailor's worst enemy. Captain Newton, and such of the officers as had been on shore, now returned, each striving and assisting in rescuing our ill-fated vessel from destruction. Orders were given to have a gun loaded and fired, with the intention of giving a more general alarm, but from the multitude of boats around it was deemed too hazardous, and the order was countermanded. It was owing to conduct like this, cool, calm, and determined courage, that no lives were lost or limbs broken. A gun had been fired from the rock, and, by order of the governor, the gates of the city thrown open, that we might have all the assistance our situation required, a circumstance unprecedented since Gibraltar was known in the annals of history. Four blue lights were now burned, two on the larboard quarter and two on the taffrail. These were immediately answered by the discharge of a 42 pounder from the British line of battle ship, Malabar 74. The ship now swinging, and the wind increasing, drove the smoke over the decks in such thick, dark masses, that it became impos-

sible to recognize anything except in the immediate neighbourhood of the flames. A boat from the dock yard now arrived, under the command of Major Hoe, with an engine and 36 convicts. They commenced playing through the after starboard air port, on the berth deck, literally flooding it with water. The Malabar's pinnace, commanded by Lieut. Maine, came up under the fore chains, having another engine, their carpenter and his two mates, and a quantity of tools. They endeavoured to scuttle the ship, commencing a few feet from the fore chains, on the larboard bow. After several fruitless trials, they were obliged to abandon it, swearing the ship was made of cast iron. The knees, bolts, timbers, and spikes, had been put together so thick, that a space of three inches could not be found without coming in contact with something harder than the tools they were working with. They accordingly stopped the scuppers, and commenced playing with their engine through the larboard forward air-port, introducing vast quantities of water around and directly over the forward store room and magazine. In the meantime, Sir George Sartorions had arrived from the garrison with a portion of the Royal Irish sappers and miners, and an additional engine, and had commenced throwing incredible quantities of water through the starboard hawse-hole. Our Purser having now returned on board, succeeded in saving the greater part of his books and specie. The Hon. Caleb Cushing, a gentleman, who by his urbanity and suavity of manners had gained the good-will and esteem of all on board, likewise, through the instrumentality of his servant and some seamen, succeeded in saving and removing part of his effects on board the ship Rajah, of Boston, Capt. Bangs, as a temporary place of safety, whose boat was plying around the ship during this eventful night, obeying the many and repeated calls made on it for help and assistance.

Captain Graham, of the American bark Pons, of Philadelphia, also rendered every assistance in his power, both personally and with his boat, he having received

from Sailing-master Alexander the ship's chronometers and instruments, which were afterwards restored in safety. The flames still increasing, had now communicated to the firemen's room, the marines' quarters, and the dispensary ; threatening the steerages, ward-room, and cabin, every moment, with total annihilation. The boats around were busily employed in picking up and saving such men and articles as came in their way. 'Voila, une caisse, ramassez-la,'\* was to be heard in one quarter, and 'a boat ! a boat ! come this way,' in another. The valves in the fire-room having been previously opened, some 6 or 8 feet of water was in the hold. The ship had now swung quite round, and careened over very much. The intelligence of our disaster having reached the commander of the British steamer *Locust*, he immediately got under weigh, and running down within fifty yards of us, sent an officer on board, apprizing Capt. Newton of the circumstance, and advising him, if possible, to slip his cable or unshackle his chain, when the steamer, which was in readiness, would tow him into deeper water. He also generously offered his services in rescuing the lives of the men. The ship being now completely enveloped in flames, it was deemed impracticable, and, consequently, the former part of the offer was declined. The forecastle decks had now become so hot, that it was impossible to stand on them barefooted. The brass curves and semi-circles embedded therein had become heated to intensity. Still did these brave fellows perform their duty, notwithstanding the combination of the elements against them, added to the certainty of there being some thousands of pounds of powder immediately beneath, and probably only a few feet from the flames. It was conduct like this that afterwards elicited from our commander his warmest praise, and most grateful thanks. The sappers and miners, who had been long employed in throwing water through the starboard hawse-hole, inundating the whole berth-

\* See, behold that box, lay hold of it.

deck, finding their exertions ineffectual, seized their axes, determined to form a new mode of attack. At this moment, a tall, athletic figure, armed with a knife and a huge axe, passed before our commander, carrying determination in his eye, and courage in his face. Who are you? asked the Captain. I am one of the Royal Irish sappers and miners, was the reply. Pass on then, my brave fellow. In a moment he was seen scuttling the spar deck, between the Captain's galley and the barber's shop, and succeeded in effecting his purpose. The swinging of the ship, and additional vigour of the flames, rendered all such means abortive.

The conflagration had now become general, and had taken possession of a great portion of the spar deck. It was evident to all, that our gallant and noble ship, hitherto the pride and ornament of the navy, must yield before such an implacable foe. Had she been lost, or sacrificed in a well-contested action, our feelings would have been different; our officers, and the crew generally, would have had an opportunity of testing her strength, and known how far they would have been able to have carried out the designs of government in her construction. A last and most desperate attempt was now made to rescue our noble ship from destruction. Lieut. Bissell on the starboard, and Lieut. Blunt on the larboard side, succeeded in sending forward simultaneously a number of men, who, after having literally waded through fire and smoke, which was curling fearfully around and over them in every direction, were received by Lieut. Gray and passed Mid. Wainwright, and placed at the pumps, thereby relieving others, who, from intense exertion, and difficulty of catching breath, had continued to work in a situation which, at any other time, would have been deemed superhuman. Devoted to a strict performance of their duty, these brave fellows most unflinchingly persevered. One man, called by his comrades 'The Bombay Poet,'\* on hearing some

\* The Bombay Poet, a nickname bestowed on a man, on account of his eccentricities. Some short time back, he had shipped at Mobile, by the run,

observations about the forward magazine, cried out, 'Let the magazine blow up and be damned, we shall have a jolly hoist of it.' Occasionally some poor fellows, overcome with heat and smoke, would plunge through the ports and seek that relief which the dismal situation of the ship denied them. From this moment all communication between the two ends of the ship ceased. The flames had communicated to the hammock nettings forward, and extended as far aft as the main-mast. The first cutter, launch, dingy, and boom covers, were in a general sheet of fire. They were bursting out of all five of the forward hatches, encompassing the promenade decks and galley, and were equally active below. In vain the hose was pointed, in vain the shouts of keep the pumps going and pass along water, were heard; our ship was fast becoming the helpless victim of an unrelenting foe. Courage and confidence kept pace with our exertions as we viewed our commander on the wheel-house, who was issuing his commands, and watching the progress of the men and flames, as calmly as if preparing to unmoor ship; his coolness and decision inspiring all with the like sentiments.

Lieut. Gray now reported to the Captain the utter impossibility of saving the ship, or even maintaining our situation any longer, the beams below being nearly burned through. A hasty consultation was immediately

for forty five dollars. After arriving at Liverpool, he was enabled, by the help of some female friends, to get through with his money in a couple of days. One morning, standing at the head of Lacy street, he observed his old captain passing, from whom he requested the loan of a shilling. The captain told him if he would run all the way down Lacy street, and cry out, five pounds for the head of Dan O'Connell, he would give him a sovereign. After a moment's hesitation, he doffed hat, jacket, and shoes, and darted down the street, exclaiming at the top of his voice, five pounds for the head of Daniel O'Connell, five pounds for the head of Daniel O'Connell! Before he got half way down, the Irish came out, armed with knives, pitchforks, and clubs, and gave chase. As he proceeded, the mob increased, swearing vengeance. Ere he had arrived at the foot of the street, he had all the inhabitants of Lacy street at his heels. He eluded them by his fleetness. Arriving in Dale street, he turned rapidly up North street, and plunging rapidly into an old hatter's shop, he stowed himself away, where he remained till the noise and riot ceased.

held on the starboard wheelhouse guard, by Capt. Newton and the officers, and one English lieutenant, who, from his uniform, appeared to be attached to the garrison. Meanwhile the pumps were still going, as the driving of the smoke and the violence of the flames enabled them. The noise and confusion which now everywhere pervaded the decks suddenly subsided, as the well-known voice of our commander reached our ears, exclaiming, Men, save yourselves ! In an instant some were plunging overboard from off the wheel-houses, the jib-boom, and the taffrail, and some diving through the ports. Others availed themselves of such parts of the running rigging as had been thrown overboard, and was hanging by the ship's side, thus lowering themselves down into the water, singing out lustily for a boat. The starboard lower steering-sail boom having been manned by such increasing numbers, and being unable to sustain them, the topping lift parted, precipitating the whole mass, men, boom, and guys, into the water. These were all picked up by an old Spaniard, having a launch marked No. 5 under his command. The larboard one having been overburdened by the immense number of men upon it, also parted and fell ; some clung to the boom, some to the guys, and others to the Jacob's ladder. The boats, which had maintained a very respectful distance from the ship, being apprehensive of an explosion, came to their assistance, rescuing many from a watery grave. Fortunately, a short time previous, the third cutter had been despatched with a number of boys and servants, to the ship Rajah, as a place of safety ; but seeing the Shark unoccupied, they got in and took possession, leaving the third cutter under the wheel-house. Many swam to the shore, and some to the shipping in the vicinity. Bess, finding her situation in the main top untenable, descended the main rigging, and sought refuge on the extreme end of the spanker-boom. The flames had now obtained entire possession of the ship. The hammock nettings, fore and <sup>aft</sup> in a light blaze ; al-

ready had they reached the fore top and fore-trysail gaff, and were creeping rapidly up the main rigging. The large smoke and steam-pipes had assumed a crimson hue, emitting flames, reaching above the main top-Lieut. Gray now lowered himself down from the wheel-house by a single rope, into a boat below. The Malabar's launch, commanded by Lieut. Maine, now came up under the starboard quarter, receiving so many on board that they could scarcely ply their oars. Other boats in rapid succession coming up, were soon filled. The launch now shoved off, but observing the bear on the spanker-boom, returned. One man ascended, and tried, by every means in his power, to induce her to come to him. Foiled in his attempts, he tried to force her overboard. From excessive fright she had become desperate, and seeming inclined to give battle, he was glad to make good his escape to the boat. We now pushed off, and obtaining a good offing from the ship, lay on our oars, determined to see the last end of our devoted vessel. The bear was now distinctly seen to leave her quarters, and running along through the flames, as if desirous of regaining the main-top, fell in the midst of them. A remarkable instance of canine sagacity was now witnessed. A favorite Newfoundland bitch belonging to the ship, seeing all hands suddenly leaving, seized her young whelp in her mouth, and jumped through one of the ports, overboard. She reached one of the boats in safety, and afterwards arrived with us in Boston. This same bitch has crossed the Atlantic eleven times, and was the only being who, on our passage home, made no complaints for the want of bedding.

Lieut. Blunt now passed by with a boat, so filled with men, that the water was within a few inches of her gunwales. The houses on the rock were lighted up, the inhabitants viewing the destruction of our ship. These lights were vividly reflected on the water, and, added to the vast body of flame which our ship afforded, presented a wild, lurid glare, horrid to behold, easier

to be conceived than expressed. The Capt. and 1st Lieut. still remained. The flames were hovering fitfully around, and within a few feet of them, seemingly contending for the mastery, as if in mockery of her late commander. Capt. Newton and Mr. Bissell, yielding to the destructive element, now descended into a boat below, and pushing off, abandoned the ship forever. Soon after, the whole forecastle decks tumbled in, carrying with them the two large Paixham guns, and their carriages, into the abyss below, the noise of which was heard above the roar of the contending elements. The gun, which had been loaded at the commencement of this dreadful tragedy, now exploded, creating great consternation among the spectators, who were plying in great numbers around the ship, in the various boats devoted to the purpose.

The conflagration was now at its height. The after bulk-heads of the fire room, steerages, and ward room, having been destroyed, the flames raged with uncontrolled violence throughout. From the hawse-holes to the cabin windows, was one general mass of flame, above and below, fore and aft, presenting a scene sublime and terrific in the highest degree. The main top-sail yard now fell, but becoming entangled in the slings and rigging of the mainyard, it hung there. Soon after, and about seven minutes after the last man had left the ship, the mainmast, yards and spars fell with a tremendous crash, tearing and smashing the bulwarks, and everything in their way. About ten minutes after, the foremast, topmast, and steering sails-boom fell. Meanwhile the fire had communicated to the coal-bunkers, which, becoming ignited, burned unceasingly, until eight o'clock the next morning. It being now after 2 o'clock in the morning, the mizen-mast fell, and some short time after a considerable explosion took place. The immense quantity of water in the ship had caused her to careen so much as to leave the starboard upper cylinder in the forward magazine, dry, or nearly so. It now exploded, tearing out nearly the whole of the starboard bows, and

forming a terrible chasm. Planks, knees, and pieces of the wreck, were thrown high in the air, threatening destruction to those around. A large quantity of water was also forced to a considerable height, like a water-spout. The concussion of the air was very great, and was felt for some distance around.

Thus perished, in one night, the most magnificent Steam Frigate that ever crossed the Atlantic. In her were combined strength of frame and beauty of proportion. With her large and lofty masts and spars, she seemed to look down with derision upon the more humble craft by which she was surrounded, as if conscious of her superiority. Containing within a powerful and highly finished engine, and a full and efficient crew, which, added to her celerity of movement, rendered her eminently calculated to protect the stars and stripes she carried; but a little while before, riding at anchor in such pride and pomp, the admired of all beholders, now a black and deserted wreck, exhibiting the last remains of the once splendid Missouri.

We now arrived along side the Malabar, and were received on board in the kindest manner, and with every demonstration of good feeling. For such of us as desired it, a sail had been spread on the gun-deck. Some availed themselves of it, and sought, in the arms of Morpheus, to forget their troubles. Others preferred remaining on deck, to witness the last end of the wreck. The morning brought with it a confirmation of our disagreeable situation. We were mustered around the capstan by Lieut. Blunt, to the number of two hundred, or thereabouts. As we passed we formed a striking contrast to the ship's crew, who were clothed in clean and neat frocks and trowsers, and nicely polished shoes, while some of us had hats without shoes, and shoes without hats; some minus a shirt, others the remnant of a pair of trowsers. All destitute of jackets, with faces and hands black and soiled, from being so long amidst flames and smoke. Many gave evidence of their excessive exertions in the preservation of the

ship, by their scorched faces and bloodshot eyes. The marines were mustered separately, much in the same predicament if not worse than ourselves. Serjeants without shirts, and corporals without shoes ; one cap between eight of them, resembling a parcel of Mexican recruits, or Botany Bay deserters. An inventory of our neighbour's wardrobe was easily taken, each, like the snail, carrying his all on his back. Our officers were in the same situation. Lieutenants appeared on the poop with Post Captains' coats, and little Middies running about with Lieutenants' uniforms reaching nearly to their heels. This caused the 'Bombay Poet' to say, he thought it advisable for more of our officers to seek John Bull's service, for he never saw such rapid promotions in his life. Breakfast being now piped, we were distributed among the different messes, and heartily regaled with bread and cocoa. It being the Sabbath, bags were piped up by the Boatswain, and soon after the drum beat to quarters. Inspection being over, Divine service commeneed in the Episcopalian style, we standing hats off, on and around the booms and about the eatheads, witnesses of a ceremony in which some heartily joined, and which others did not view with indifference. After Divine service, the crew proposed raising a subsciption for our relief. This offer was declined, the same crew having previously assisted the crews of two other ships, in a similar destitute condition. We experienced much kindness from all on board, which, added to their assistance the previous night, will be long remembered. In the mean time the American ship Rajah, Capt. Bangs, had been chartered for conveying us to Boston. Toward evening, the Malabar's boats, assisted by some of our own, were busily employed in transporting us to our new home. We here found some of our shipmates, who had taken refuge on board the preceding night. On this and the following day our boats were plying in all directions around the bay, seeking out and recovering such men and boys as were absent. English steamers, Dutch galliots, and

Portuguese luggers yielded up their proportion of refugees. The English Barracks, wine houses, and restaurants, likewise furnished their quota, and ere night-fall we once more made our number good. Not a soul was lost. Agreeably to the arrangements of our Commander, our First Lieutenant now took the command of us. Capt. Newton, with some of the officers, and a small portion of the crew, remained behind to dismantle the wreck, and recover all that was valuable or useful. The ensuing Sunday was appointed for sailing.

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## CHAPTER IX.

Ah! hapless ship, thy cruise is o'er,  
No more thy thunder's heard on shore ;  
Thy doom is cast, no more to roam,  
Thy gallant crew is called home.

THE intermediate time was now occupied in hoisting in, and stowing away our wood, water, and provisions. Some of the boats and several launches were, in the meantime, busily engaged with gangs of men, in rescuing such portions of the rigging, sails, &c., as could most conveniently be got at. Our two bowers, starboard sheet, and kedge anchors, with fifteen fathoms of chain, together with the ship's coppers, and a quantity of iron and copper, were saved, and transported on board, in safety. On Sunday the 3d September, we were mustered in presence of the Captain, who heartily thanked us for our exertions during that fearful night, and recommended a continuation of discipline and subordination, during our passage home, as tending in an eminent degree to our safety. He deeply regretted the loss of the ship, and sympathized with us in our misfortunes. His feelings were so overcome by his recent loss and troubles, that he was denied utterance. In feeling for his, we nearly forgot our own troubles, and hopefully looked forward to better days. After taking a general

farewell, he returned to his boat, amidst the hearty cheers of the whole crew, who had manned the rigging for the purpose. We now got under weigh, and soon bade adieu to Gibraltar, and with it our wrecked fortunes and disappointed hopes.

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## CONCLUSION.

A FAVOURABLE breeze continuing for some days, we were soon wafted some hundreds of miles on our course. Every heart felt buoyed up with the hope of a speedy passage, expecting thereby a meeting with their families and friends. It was three days after our appearance in the Rajah, before we were all supplied with the miserable rug, which was served out to us. For the want of hammocks, and bedding, we were obliged to lie on the bare decks. The weather now becoming wet and stormy, we experienced every inconvenience resulting from such numbers being crowded together in such a small space. The entire lower deck became one general field-bed, and during the succession of heavy tempestuous weather which followed, we were continually sliding from place to place. Pots, pans, and kettles were thrown from their stations into the midst of us, thereby creating such confusion and noise as drove sleep from the eyes of all. Many, despairing of obtaining any rest, formed themselves into groups, each singing or rather screaming songs and catches, in their own peculiar language, making 'confusion worse confounded.' After a long, wet, and boisterous passage of forty-two days, we arrived in Boston in safety, and, in the afternoon of the same day, were transferred on board the U. S. ship Ohio.

